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the population is uncertain, but supposed to have been from 6000 to 7000.

The great shock appears to have been simultaneous, and was most sensibly felt to the southward, having extended 500 miles in length by 90 in breadth. It was felt in the island of Cyprus. Forty villages have been totally, and eleven partially destroyed. It were useless to enumerate them here, as the greater part do not appear on any map of Syria yet published. The number of lives lost is stated at about 6000, but it is much to be feared, that in reality they greatly exceed that number.

IX.—*Narrative of a Journey into the Interior of Omán*, in 1835. By Lieutenant Wellsted, Indian Navy. Communicated by Sir John Barrow, Bart. Read April 10, 1837.

IN the course of my employment on the survey of the southern and western coasts of Arabia, my attention was constantly directed towards the state of the contiguous provinces, and with this view I undertook several short journeys into the interior; but no opportunity of penetrating, to any considerable distance, occurred until the commencement of the year 1835, when Mohammed Ali dispatched a force from Egypt, in order to take possession of the Coffee country. My proposal to accompany his army in that expedition, for the purpose of endeavouring from thence to reach Hadramaút, was immediately acceded to by the Indian government; but before their sanction could be conveyed to me, intelligence arrived of the Pashá's force having been led into a defile, in the Assair country, and there defeated with great slaughter; a miserable remnant alone reaching the sea-shore.

Foiled, therefore, in this quarter, I determined, on my return to Bombay, to turn my attention towards 'Omán, a territory almost as little known as any part of Arabia.

After obtaining the necessary permission, I embarked on board a small schooner (the *Cysene*) for Maskat,\* at which port, after a pleasant passage, we arrived on the 21st of November.

I found Sayyid S'aíd, the Imám of Maskat or sovereign of 'Omán, ready, with his characteristic liberality, in every way to forward my views. Letters were prepared under his own direction to the chiefs of the different districts through which I had to pass, and on November 25th, I quitted that port to proceed to Súr.

Maskat was known to some of the ancient geographers,† as it is probably the Moscha, a port of the Hadramitæ mentioned

\* Also spelt with the common k and t; but k and t are probably requisite.—F. S.

† *Geographa*, Lib. vii. cap. 6, p. 153.

by Ptolemy, noticed also by Arrian in the *Periplus* of the Erythrean Sea,\* as the great emporium of India, Persia, and Arabia. It is situated at the extremity of a small cove in lat.  $23^{\circ} 38'$  N., long.  $58^{\circ} 42'$  E., at the gorge of an extensive pass, which widens from this point, as it advances into the interior. In its principal features Maskat differs but little from the other eastern towns. Arriving from seaward, its forts, erected on dark-coloured hills, which almost encircle the town, the level roofs of its houses, the domes of the mosques, and their lofty minarets, have an extraordinary and romantic appearance; but as soon as we land the illusion disappears. Narrow, crowded streets, and filthy bázárs, nearly blocked up with porters bearing burdens of dates, grain, &c.; wretched huts, intermingled with low and paltry houses, meet the eye in every direction. There are, nevertheless, within the town some good and substantial houses—the palace of the Imám, that of the governor, and those of some other public officers, are of this description. Maskat is not only of importance, as the emporium of a very considerable trade between Arabia, Persia, and India, but also as the principal sea-port of 'Omán. Its imports are chiefly cloth and corn, the annual value of which is estimated at 3,300,000 dollars, which, if we except Jiddah, is greater than that of the imports into any other sea-port town in Arabia. The customs are fixed at 5 per cent. on all imported goods, but no duties of any kind are levied on exports. These principally consist of dates, rūivas,† or red dye, much valued in India; sharks' fins shipped off for China, where they are used for making soup, and a variety of other purposes, and salt fish. The returns are made principally in bullion and coffee.

I should fix the population of Maskat and the adjoining town of Matarah at 60,000 souls. They are a mixed race, the descendants of Arabs, Persians, Indians, Syrians, by the way of Baghdad and Basrah, Kurds, Afgháns, Belúches, &c., who, attracted by the equity of the government, have settled there, either for the purposes of commerce or to avoid the despotism of the surrounding countries. The inhabitants are principally engaged in commercial or maritime pursuits, and except ulwah,‡ sugar, and a few rude cloths and cloaks fabricated there, as well as in the inland towns, they have no manufactures in 'Omán. There is no prince in the East whose name ranks higher than that of the Imám of Maskat. He is tolerant, brave, generous, and just, and these qualities have gained him, with the surrounding nations, the title of the second 'Omar.

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\* Vincent's *Periplus*.

† Rûiva (in Portuguese) madder, *Rubia tinctorum* of Linnæus.—F. S.

‡ Ulwah is a compound of sugar, clarified butter, almonds, and flour, and in common use in Arabia.

This prince is particularly distinguished by his abstinence from oppressive imposts and arbitrary punishments; by the protection which he affords to the merchants of every nation who come to reside in his capital, and by the toleration which he extends equally to all religious persuasions; while, on the other hand, his probity, impartiality, and lenience, together with a strict regard for the welfare of his subjects, have rendered him as much respected and admired by the town Arabs, as his liberality and personal courage have endeared him to the Bedowins.

On the way to Súr I touched at Kilhát, which is an ancient town, mentioned by several Arabian authors. Though its remains cover an extensive space, only one building, an old mosque, has escaped destruction. Near the ruins is a small fishing village, the inhabitants of which also employ themselves in digging for gold coins, on some of which the name of the Caliph Hárún al-Rashid is said to have been deciphered.

On November 28th I arrived at Súr, in lat.  $22^{\circ} 37'$ , and long.  $59^{\circ} 36'$ , where, after receiving every attention from the Sheikh, and making a short journey to the north-westward, which appears on the map, on December 2nd, my camels and guides, to the number of fourteen, being collected, I quitted the town, and proceeded westward to the district of Jailán. Súr, the port of this district, is merely a large collection of huts, neatly constructed with the leaves of the date-palm, and erected on either side of a deep lagoon, which also serves for its harbour. It is computed that not less than 200 bagalás\* belong to this port; they trade during the fair season to and between the shores of India, Africa, and the Arabian and Persian Gulfs. Its own exports and imports are trifling, and nearly the same as those of Maskat; but the profits derived from their trade are sufficient to support its inhabitants in affluence during the idle season of the year.

On quitting Súr our route continued in a south-westerly direction for twenty miles along a shallow valley, called Wádi Falij.† Rounded masses of limestone form its bed, between which a few stunted bushes, the only signs of vegetable life, force their way. The hills on either hand were of a light red or yellow sandstone, with an occasional streak of orange or purple. From the termination of this valley to Bení-Abú-'Alí, in lat.  $22^{\circ} 3' N.$ , which we reached December 4th, the country continues flat and uninteresting. My course here was S.S.W., and the direct distance from Súr is forty-two miles.

I may here observe that during the S.W. monsoon, the southern

\* A small vessel, probably from the Bagalá or Baglá, a kind of heron (*Ardea Torra*).—F. S.

† Idrisi (*Geographia Nubiensis*), p. 53. Falj, according to Gabriel Iconita, Falij or Falj means stream.—F. S.

coast of Arabia is a dead lee-shore, and neither ships or boats venture to approach it.

Before I reached the encampment of the Bení-Abú-'Alí Bedowins, I was not without some apprehensions as to the treatment I might receive ; and my reasons will be best understood when I have stated the circumstances which brought the English into collision with them.

In 1820 Captain Thompson,\* who, after the fall of Rás-el-Khaimah (Cape Tent), and the other pirate ports in the Persian Gulf, had been left on the island of Kishm with a small force of 800 men, principally sepoys, proceeded to Šúr, where he formed a junction with the troops of the Imám, and advanced against this tribe, who, it was believed, had been engaged in acts of piracy. The Bení-Abú-'Alí Bedowins permitted their enemies to approach within a short distance of their fort, and then, as they were sweeping round a date-grove, attacked them on their flank (which was but a few yards from it) with so much fury, that nearly the whole of the force was cut to pieces. Captain Thompson, two officers, and not more than 50 or 60 men, alone succeeded in reaching the sea-shore.

Intelligence of this defeat had no sooner reached India, than a larger force of 3000 men, under General Sir Lionel Smith, was dispatched against them.†

Nowise daunted by their superior numbers, the Bedowins again quitted their fort, and met the British force on a large plain contiguous to it. Their numbers did not exceed 800, and many of their females fought in their ranks. They rushed on with the same impetuosity as before ; nor was it until more than two-thirds of their number were slain, or desperately wounded, that they gave up the contest.‡ Many of the survivors were taken prisoners of war to India, and after being confined there for some time, were furnished with presents, and sent back to their own country. Since this period no European had held any intercourse with them.

As soon after entering their territories as possible, I proceeded to the tent of their Sheikh, and immediately proclaimed myself an Englishman, desirous of passing a few days with them.

I had no sooner made this known, than the whole tribe was in a tumult of acclamation. The few old guns they had were fired from the different towers, matchlocks were kept going till sunset, and both old and young used their utmost efforts to entertain me. They pitched my tent, slaughtered sheep, and presented me with

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\* See Captain Thompson's Report, dated 18th November, 1820, *Asiatic Journal*, vol. xi., p. 593.

† In January, 1821.

‡ In March, 1821.—*Asiatic Journal*, xii., 364.

milk by gallons. In truth, I was not a little surprised at a reception so truly warm and hospitable.

Before me lay scattered the ruins of the very fort we had dismantled; my tent was pitched on the same spot where we had nearly annihilated their tribe: thus reducing them from being the most powerful in 'Omán to their present petty state. All, however, in the confidence I had shown in throwing myself amidst them, was forgotten. Notwithstanding we may entertain very different sentiments respecting our first attack on this people, and it is known that the Indian government subsequently did so; yet the whole affair being quite to a Bedowin's taste, both here and in every other quarter, I heard nothing but praises of the English. "We have fought, you have made us every compensation in your power for those who fell, and we should now be friends," observed the Sheikh's ladies, when speaking to me afterwards of the transaction.

After passing a few days with this grateful people, I proceeded to the south-westward over the great desert, and have little doubt that I should have found no considerable difficulty in reaching the celebrated country called the Maharah district, on the south-east coast of Arabia, but 'Omán, yet unexplored, was before me.

On the first day, December 6, our route, with little variation, was about south-south-west, and as we were mounted on good camels, the extent of country we passed over was forty-five miles. For two-thirds of this distance the face of the country was level, but intersected with the traces of numerous torrents. From thence to our halting place we threaded our way amidst sandy mounds, topped with acacias, and encamped near some wells of brackish water.

On the 7th, continuing over the same country by about west by south-half-south, we arrived at a Bedowin encampment, where there are also wells.

From thence we returned in a north-north-easterly direction to Bení-Abú-'Alí, crossing in our course several extensive plains, covered with a saline efflorescence.

Quitting this encampment, December the 10th, we followed in a north-westerly direction the shallow valley of Wádí-Bethà, and on the 12th arrived at Bedí'ah. My course from Bení-Abú-'Alí to this point was north  $52^{\circ}$  west, and its distance, in a direct line, is 42 miles.

Here there are seven hamlets, situated within oases, which are watered by subterranean rivulets, sometimes conveyed to them by artificial means, from the distance of four and even five miles. Thus abundantly irrigated, these isolated spots possess a soil so fertile, that nearly every grain, fruit, and vegetable common to India, Persia, or Arabia, is produced almost spontaneously;

and the tales of the oases will no longer be regarded as an exaggeration, since a single step conveys the traveller from the glare and sand of the desert to the richest soil, moistened by a hundred rills, teeming with the most luxuriant vegetation, and embowered by noble and stately trees, whose umbrageous foliage the fiercest rays of a noontide sun cannot penetrate. The almond, fig, and walnut-trees grow to an enormous size, and the fruit appears clustered so thickly on the orange and lime, that I do not believe a tenth part of what they afford is ever gathered. Above all towers the date-palm, and lends its grateful shade to protect the jaded traveller. Some idea may be formed of the density of this mass of foliage by the effect it produces in lessening the terrestrial radiation. Fahrenheit's thermometer, which within the house stood at  $55^{\circ}$ , at six inches from the ground fell to  $42^{\circ}$ .

From Bedi'ah I continued to pass through a succession of other oases, which appear on the map, but having no peculiarity beyond what I have described, the insertion of a mere list of their names in this paper would serve no good or useful purpose.

On December the 13th we arrived at Ibrah, which is an old town, containing several handsome houses. The style of building is quite peculiar to this part of Arabia. To avoid the damp, and to catch an occasional beam of the sun above the trees, they are usually very lofty. A parapet leading around the upper part is turreted, and on some of the largest turrets guns are mounted. The windows and doors have the Saracenic arch; every part of the building is profusely decorated with ornaments of stucco in bas-relief, some of them in very good taste. The doors are also cased with brass, and have rings and other massive ornaments of the same metal.

Ibrah is in lat.  $22^{\circ} 41'$ , bears north  $42^{\circ}$ , west from Bedi'ah, distant 22 miles.

Quitting Ibrah on December the 13th, our course still along Wádi Bethá, having on either hand plains dotted with grassy knolls, we arrived December the 16th at Semmed, an extensive Oasis, situated in lat.  $22^{\circ} 50'$ . In the vicinity of this town there is a large fort, garrisoned by the Imam's soldiers.

From Semmed I proceeded to Minná, which town I reached on the 21st of December. Minná differs from the other oases in having its cultivation in open fields. As we crossed these, with lofty almond, citron, and orange-trees, yielding a delicious fragrance on either hand, exclamations of astonishment and admiration burst from us. "Is this Arabia," we said, "this the country we have looked on heretofore as a desert?" Verdant fields of corn and sugar-cane, stretching along for miles, were before us; streams of water, flowing in all directions, intersected our path, and the happy and contented appearance of the

peasants agreeably helped to fill up the smiling picture. The atmosphere was delightfully clear and pure; and as we trotted joyously along, giving or returning the salutation of peace or welcome, I could almost fancy we had at length reached that "Araby the blest," which we had hitherto regarded as existing only in the fictions of our poets.

On December 23rd I arrived at Neswah,\* in lat.  $22^{\circ} 56'$ , which is the largest and most populous of all the oases. Here I arranged with the Sheikh for other guides, to proceed to the Jebel-Akhḍar, or green mountains, which had been described to me as elevated, populous, and fruitful.

Many obstacles were thrown in my way, but by patience and a few well-timed presents, I overcame them. Proceeding to Tanúf, situated at the gorge of the pass, I obtained asses, which for size, sturdiness, and sureness of step, are scarcely inferior to mules. Mounted on these, I found but little difficulty in ascending to the summit of the range, on which I passed several days.

The Jebel-Akhḍar extend, from east to west which is their greatest length, a distance of thirty miles. At right angles to these they are intersected by narrow deep valleys, along which on either side the torrents descend during the rainy season, and either lose themselves in the sandy soil, while crossing the plain below, or convey their water into the ocean.

Taken generally, the range by no means deserves the appellation it has received of green; for a great proportion of its surface is bare limestone rock, which presents, in some places, naked tabular masses; and in others, the shallow deposit which is lodged in the hollows, is as poor as the worst part of the plains. But the valleys and several hollows are extensively cultivated, and supply such abundance of fruit and other productions, that they have been considered as common to the whole range, and hence its name of "Green."

I ascertained by means of several observations on the temperature of boiling water the highest points of the range to be 6000 feet above the level of the sea. In the winter season, after rain, they have, therefore, not unfrequently ice and snow; and the climate, even in the summer season, must be very temperate.

At the period of my visit it was winter, and the trees in the several valleys were all stripped of their leaves; but in the summer, when everything is in bloom, it must be a delightful resi-

\* Niebuhr's Nissuwa, i. e. Nizzuwah, the Tama of the printed Epitome of Idrisi, Geogr. Nubiensis, p. 54. It is  $\text{O}_j$  in both the MSS. at Oxford.—F. S.

Niebuhr, who placed it from such information as he could obtain, has it in  $22^{\circ} 52' \text{N.}$



dence. Water, gushing from several springs, never fails them, and affords abundant means of irrigation.

The Bení-Riyám, who inhabit this range, differ in many respects from their neighbours of the plains. Although their number does not amount to more than 1000 men, yet from the steep, rugged, and dangerous nature of the passes, which frequently lead through defiles, where a few resolute men might make a good stand against a thousand; and also the strong positions which they have chosen for the erection of their villages, there is every reason to believe their assertion, that they have never known a master.

In their persons, although tall and muscular, yet they have not the usual healthy and hardy look of mountaineers; but on the contrary, their faces are wrinkled and haggard, and they appear as if suffering from premature decay.

They are addicted to an immoderate use of wine, which they distil from their grapes in large quantities, and partake of openly and freely at their several meals. They defend the practice, by asserting that the cold renders it necessary.

This wine, in flavour and appearance, bears a close resemblance to that brought from Shiraz; large quantities are taken in skins to the surrounding countries, and to the sea-coast, where it is sold publicly. In the winter season the men leave the culture of the vines to the women, and having nothing to do themselves, pass their time within their houses, until the sun is sufficiently high to warm them, and then they crawl forth to bask in it. The inhabitants of the plains consider the Bení-Riyám in other respects as an irascible, slothful, and immoral race, and bring against them a still heavier charge,—that of being niggard and sullen in the exercise of their hospitality;—and certainly what came under my observation during my stay among them, produced little which could be advanced in contradiction of such accusations.

During my stay on these mountains, I remained at the small hamlet of Shírází, in lat.  $23^{\circ} 3' N$ .

On December 31st I returned to Nizzuwah, and employed myself from thence till the 11th of January in making short journeys to the desert. On these occasions I mixed much with the inhabitants, frequently living and sleeping in their huts or tents with them. On all occasions I was received with kindness, and often with a degree of hospitality, above rather than below the means of those who were called upon to exercise it; and I was enabled to collect, in consequence, much new and interesting matter, connected with the domestic habits and condition of this interesting race.

From the 10th to the 15th I remained in Nizzuwah, employing

myself with my map, and transcribing my journal. During this period I was compelled to lodge at a small house within the oases, where the vegetation clustered thickest. My servants were first attacked, and then myself, with most violent fever; I was delirious forty-eight hours after its first appearance, and from thence to the 18th was insensible to all that passed. Some Arabs, sent by the Sheikh, took care of me, I believe, for a part of this time, and the fever on that day reached its height, a favourable change took place, and I regained possession of my faculties, though much reduced and debilitated. But to proceed further in our present state of health was impossible, and to remain where we were was to destroy the only chance of the recovery of the other patients, who were now sinking fast. I was consequently obliged to direct my course, by short and easy journeys, to Sib on the sea-coast, which is justly celebrated for the salubrity of its climate. We reached this town on January 30th, and remained recruiting our health until the 25th of February.

A few days previous to quitting it I wrote to the Imám of Maskát, requesting he would furnish a guide to conduct me to Bireimah, the frontier station of the Wahhábis. From hence I had, though the season was far advanced, but little reason to doubt my being able, with some káfilah (caravan), yet to reach Der'ayyah.\* My disappointment was, therefore, very great to learn from his highness, in reply, that the Wahhábis had but a few days before made a sudden irruption into the northern parts of 'Omán; that they had seized, plundered, and burnt several towns near to Sohár; that the inhabitants of Obrí, on the road to Bireimah, were engaged in hostilities against their neighbours; and that his highness would most strongly recommend, in the present unsettled state of affairs, that I should not continue my journey. I never, however, contemplated being able to complete the duty on which I was employed without risk, and this was an occasion involving in itself the examination of nearly half the province, which appeared to justify the exercise of it to the fullest extent; nor did I as yet despair, if I could reach Bireimah, of being able to pass on to Der'ayyah. I therefore, with many acknowledgments for his kindness, communicated my wishes to the Imám, and I was well pleased on the morning of the 24th to find a most respectable old man, well known throughout the country, at my tent in perfect readiness to accompany me.

We reached Suweik † on the 29th of February, and received

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\* The capital of the Wahhábis, in the Wádi Bení Hanifah. It is one of the two defiles by which alone the Nejd-el'árid can be entered.--Jehán numá, p. 527.—F. S.

† The little market.—F. S.

during our short visit there much hospitality from its Sheïkh Seyyid Helál, who obtained for us camels to conduct us to Obrí. We quitted Suweïk on Friday the 4th of March. The groves and cultivated ground extend about three miles from the beach; beyond that the plains are crossed by many shallow streams, which had originated among the hills during the late rains; very large acacia-trees dot the surface of either, and seated beneath their scanty and feathery shade, might frequently be seen an Arab shepherd with several enormous dogs to aid him in his charge of the flock; but his pipe and crook are wanting; their place is supplied with matchlock and spear.

On March 5th we arrived at Sedá, in lat.  $23^{\circ} 45'$ , and situated at the gorge of a pass, where it emerges from the mountain chain, which runs parallel to the coast. From thence we proceeded through Wádí-Howásanah to Makiniyát, which was once a large city, but is now nothing more than a straggling village. It has never, I understood, recovered from a visit which the Wahhábís paid to it in 1800. They then took the castle, burnt the houses, and destroyed the greater number of the trees. By a noon observation of the sun, and several meridional transits of the stars, I fixed the latitude of Makiniyát at  $23^{\circ} 21' 25''$  N.

Quitting Makiniyát on March 11th, we continued our journey towards Obrí. Our route, until we reached Ayal, was along a broad valley; on either side the hills run in a table-topped range with sloping sides, or are broken into detached chains, presenting isolated pyramidal hills, somewhat truncated on the upper part, but of the same uniform level and direction as the continuous ridges.

From Ayal we passed a succession of sandy and barren plains, and on March 12th arrived at Obrí.

Owing to the very unsettled state of the country it was not without some delay, and after encountering considerable personal risk, that we succeeded in reaching this place, and when we had done so, great was my vexation and annoyance to find myself amidst an army of 2000 Wahhábís, then in possession of it. They were proceeding to attack the district of Bediáh, a portion of the Imám's territories; and when they discovered we had been travelling under that prince's protection, matters wore a very serious aspect, and it was not without difficulty that I succeeded in escaping from the town without being either pillaged or murdered. Foiled in this quarter, I therefore again returned to Suweïk, and from thence proceeded, touching at the several intermediate towns, in a boat to Shinás, where I again made an unsuccessful attempt to reach Bireïmah.

When we returned the season was so far advanced that I was compelled to quit the coast for India.

I have subjoined a few observations on the general features of the country.

'Omán may be described as a narrow strip of land of irregular width, but never exceeding 150 miles. It is bounded on the east by the Indian Ocean, on the west by extensive deserts, and extends in a direct line from the Island of Mazura, in lat.  $20^{\circ} 18'$ , and in long.  $58^{\circ} 56'$  nearly 400 miles to Rás or Cape Musendom, in lat.  $26^{\circ} 24'$ , and long.  $56^{\circ} 39'$ , where it terminates in the form of an acute angle.

By the natives of the country this part of Arabia is subdivided into four districts. 1. Jailán, comprehending Bení-Abú-'Alí, and all that tract of country to the south-east of Bediáh; 2. 'Omán, from Bediáh north-west to Makiniyát; 3. Dhorrah, from Makiniyát to Bireimah; and 4. Batna, extending in a narrow strip along shore from Síb to Khórfakán.\*

The general features and outlines of the province may be thus laid down. A range of mountains, forming a part of the great chain which almost encircles Arabia, traverses in a direction nearly parallel to the shore, the whole extent of the province from Maskat to Šúr. The hills take their rise close to the beach, but to the north of that port they retreat considerably from it.

In lat.  $23^{\circ}$  a second range, Jebel-Akhḍar, or green mountains, still more elevated, run in a direction nearly transverse to the former; low parallel ridges, forming the roots of either branch, extend to a considerable distance from them.

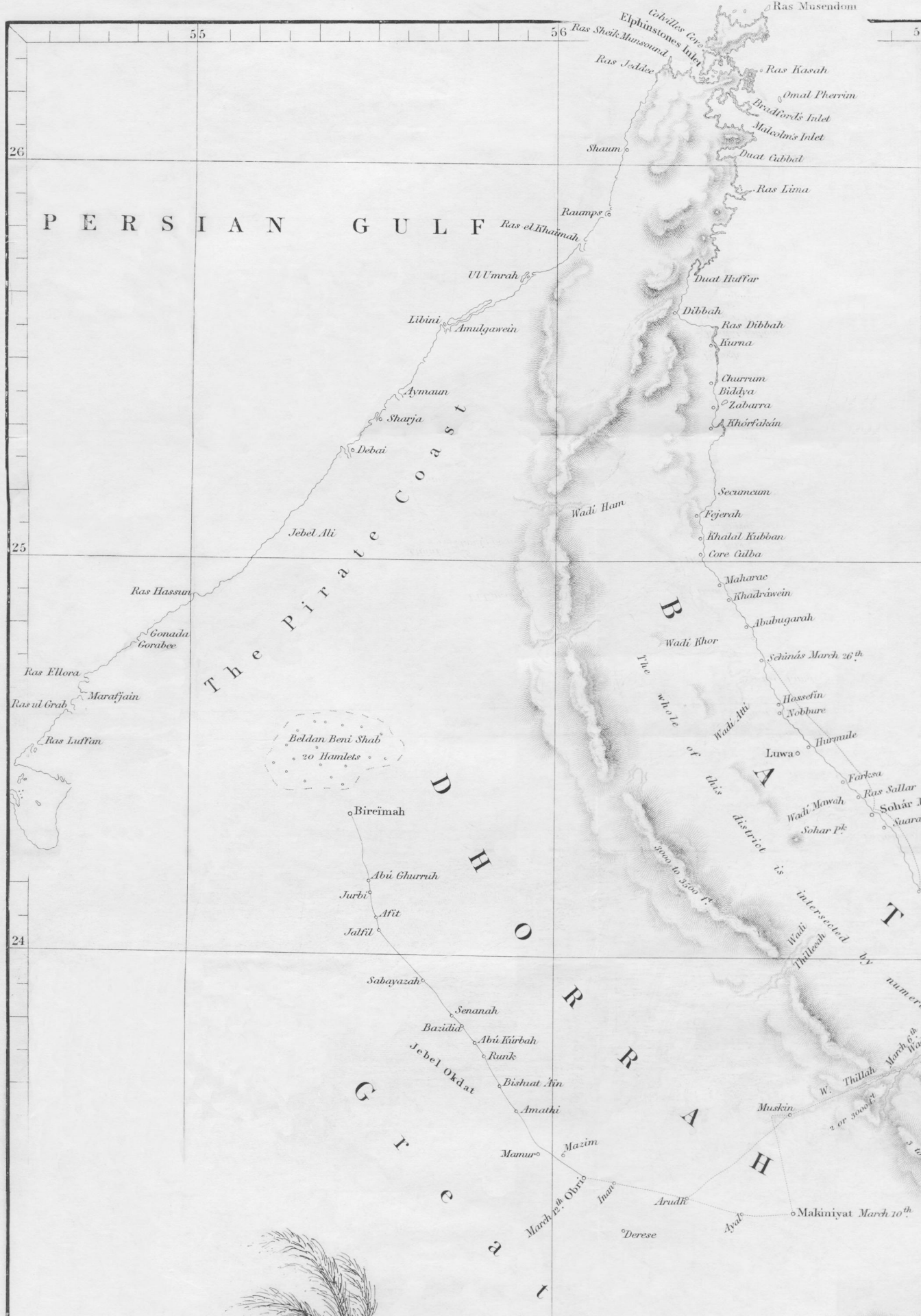
From the Jebel-Akhḍar the chain continues to Rás-Musendom, throwing off in its course thither another branch which extends to Rás-el-Khaimah on the shores of the Persian Gulf. The space included within this bifurcation and the sea is broken into piles of mountains, which are singularly disposed, and of various elevations. The width of the chain does not in general exceed twelve or fifteen miles, and the average height of the central and most elevated hills is from 3000 to 3500 feet. Some of the highest points of the Jebel-Akhḍar rise, however, nearly 6000 feet above the level of the sea. With the exception of this range they are not wooded and barren. Felspar and mica-slate enter most commonly into the formation of the lower ranges, and primitive limestone the upper.

By the map and narrative it will be seen that from Bení-Abú-'Alí to Nizzuwah I traversed a line of oases, and that the space between them and the mountains on the sea-shore presents nothing but arid plains, destitute of either towns or villages.

To the northward of Síb the width of the Tehámah, a maritime plain (the Batna of the map), is from twenty to forty miles.

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\* Pronounced Khórfakán by the Persians, who commonly give that sound to the final *an*.—F. S.



[illegible]

MAP  
of  
OMAN  
in  
ARABIA

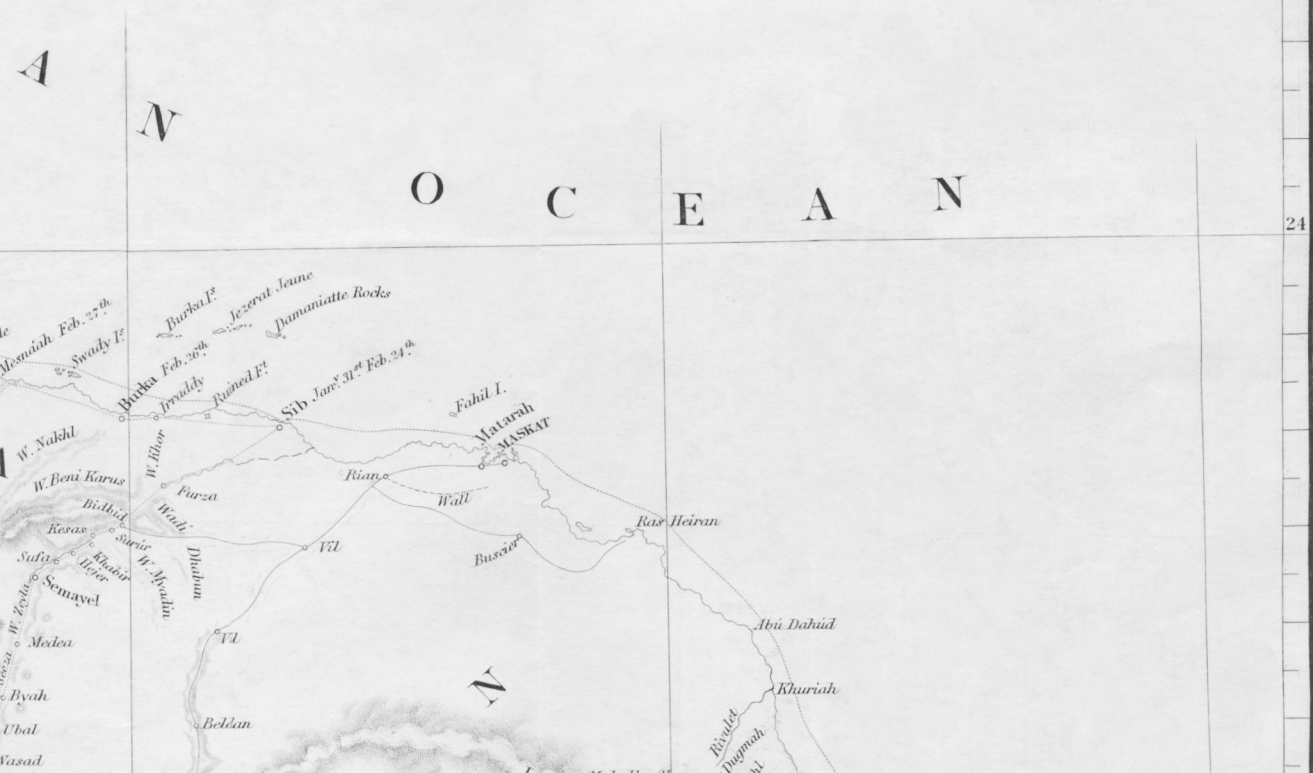
Geographical Miles  
English Miles

5 10 20  
5 10 20

M A P  
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in  
A R A B I A

5 10 20 30 40  
Geographical Miles

5 10 20 30 40  
English Miles













It rises with a slight but gradual ascent from the sea to the base of the principal chain; and although not crossed by any of the rivers which appear on our maps, it has, nevertheless, some considerable streams, which continue for the greatest part of the year to pour their waters into the sea.

Beyond, or to the westward of the mountains, in the northern districts, few towns or fertile spots occur, and in some instances the margin of the desert is but a few miles removed from them. From the summit of the *Jebel-Akhḍar*, I had an opportunity during a clear day to obtain an extensive view of the desert to the south-west of 'Omán. Vast plains of loose drift-sand, across which even the hardy Bedowin dare scarcely venture, spread out as far as the eye can reach. Not a hill, nor even a change of colouring in the plains occurs, to break the unvarying and desolate appearance of the scene. 'Omán may, therefore, be described as a desert, thickly studded with oases, and containing amidst its mountains many fertile valleys, yet many of these are at a considerable distance from each other, and it must be admitted that the quantity of cultivated country bears but a small proportion to that which is incorrigibly barren; for the intermediate space between the oases to the westward and the Great Sandy Desert is an arid and barren plain, either sandy or clayey, according as the aluminous or siliceous particles prevail.

It will be seen by the map that there are several large towns on the sea-coast; but with the exception of *Rosták*, which is extensive and well built, there are none of any extent in the interior. Many of those which, from native information, have figured in our maps as large cities, and are even classed by Niebuhr as principalities, do not now rise into more importance than villages or hamlets. The ruins of houses, and the remains of former embankments, denote however both a superior population and more extensive cultivation; but wherever irrigation ceases, the course of a few seasons converts the land, however fertile it may have previously been, into a desert. The whole of these towns are now either situated within or contiguous to an oasis.

The direction of my several journeys is pointed out in the map. In order to show the degree of confidence to which this may be entitled, it is necessary that I should state, that all the principal towns, villages, and oases are fixed from actual observation, and with the exception of *Rosták*, which is placed in the position it occupies from compass bearings, and *Bīreimah*, the frontier station of the *Wahhábís*, there is no place of importance in 'Omán, the geographical site of which has not been correctly determined.